

Domestic Workers Bill of Rights

Domestic work is a growing sector.

There are more than 2.5 million domestic workers across the United States. 90 percent of domestic workers are women, the majority are women of color and immigrants. Domestic workers are nannies, house cleaners, and home care workers that care for our nation's families and often work inside our homes. Home care is already one of the fastest growing occupations in our entire economy due to the rapidly growing aging population. By 2026, [one of the fastest growing professions](#) in the country will be care jobs.

Domestic work underpins our economy.

Domestic workers make life work for millions of working families by caring for our children, our aging parents, our loved ones living with disabilities, and our homes. Domestic work is the work that makes other work possible.

Being a domestic worker too often means living in poverty and tolerating abuse.

Caring is inherently personal and intimate work, and takes place behind closed doors. It is work that is often hidden; workplaces are unregistered and unregulated. Studies estimate that domestic workers [are paid about \\$11 per hour](#), although in practice wages are often lower, and that domestic workers have little, if any, access to other benefits such as health care or retirement that can reduce economic insecurity for working families. These dynamics increase workers' vulnerability to exploitation and make it almost impossible for them to take care of their own families. Studies of domestic workers have shown that they have little access to the protections many workers have come to expect in the 21st century and they are often afraid to report abuse for fear of retaliation.

Basic labor protections have long excluded domestic workers, especially women of color.

As a workforce that is predominantly women of color and immigrants, domestic workers have faced a long history of exclusion from basic labor protections, rooted in the legacy of slavery. Our society's perception of care work, traditionally done by women of color, is that it is not "real" work. Domestic workers were specifically excluded from federal labor protections like minimum wage, safety and health laws and the right to organize. Many other laws such as anti-discrimination and harassment laws exclude domestic workers by default, due to the non-traditional nature of the workforce.

The *Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Act* addresses the exclusions of the past, and creates an innovative vision for the future.

U.S. Senator Kamala D. Harris (D-CA) and U.S. Representative Pramila Jayapal (D-WA-07) are introducing the *Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Act*, the first national legislation affording rights and protections to millions of domestic workers in America.

The *Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Act*:

- Includes domestic workers in common workplace rights and protections like paid overtime, safe and healthy working conditions, and freedom from workplace harassment and discrimination;
- Creates new rights and protections that address the unique challenges of domestic work such as written contracts, affordable healthcare and retirement benefits, fair scheduling, support for survivors of sexual harassment, and grants for workforce training; and
- Ensures that rights aren't just on paper, but that they can be enforced and implemented: "know-your-rights" information, mechanisms to prevent retaliation, a confidential hotline and emergency access tool to address harassment, affordability for Medicaid consumers, and a worker and employer-led federal taskforce.

In sum, the *Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Act* addresses the exclusions of the past, creates a framework for safe and dignified work environments, and sets concrete protections for the whole care sector. This bill aims to fix many of the loopholes in labor law and create new, innovative solutions to the unique nature of domestic work.